

II. METHOD

Selection of Study Inspection Station Sites

Categories

A review of child safety seat inspection stations operational in October 2001 revealed the following six types of station sponsorships:

1. Fire Departments/Emergency Medical Service Agencies
2. Law Enforcement Agencies
3. Health Care Providers/Hospitals
4. Retail/Service Companies
5. Automobile Dealers
6. Community Organizations

Selection Criteria

The project staff developed eight basic criteria for potential study sites.

1. Permanent Inspection Station – Inspection station can be:
 - a. Stationary – A fixed site where parents or caregivers can either go to have their child's safety seat checked or call for check-up appointments. These sites can be established indoors or outdoors.
 - b. Mobile – Inspection services are conducted on a fixed schedule, including vans or trailers that travel on a schedule to locations where child passenger safety inspection facilities are set up and inspections performed either on a drop-in or appointment basis.
 - c. Both
2. Use of certified inspectors – Inspection station must have at least one AAA Certified CPS Technician or Technician Instructor directly involved in the program. All others involved in the hands-on checking of seats must have attended a national- or state-recognized CPS training program. Certifications and trainings must be up-to-date.
3. Sufficient length of operation – Inspection station must be currently providing services, and must have been in operation for at least one year prior to October 2001.
4. Volume of inspections – Rural inspection station must inspect an average of ten child safety seats per month for at least one year. Suburban/urban inspection station must conduct an average of 20 per month for at least one year.
5. Standard system of data collection and recording – Site must have an intact system of data collection and recording, and will allow project staff to review such.

6. Existence of Operating Policies – Inspection station should have policies in place addressing staffing, liability, seat replacement and other issues.
7. Sites would secure feedback from parents/caregivers who have utilized inspection station – Site policies should allow communication with people who have used the site's services in order to obtain feedback as to outcomes of inspections and public perception of the inspection process and/or recommendations for improvement.
8. Agree to participate in study – Inspection station administrators and staff should agree to a 2-3 day on-site visit by project staff and allow project staff to observe inspections and procedures, meet with program administrators, meet with staff and meet with parents/caregivers who have utilized services.

Selection Process

In December 2001, project staff requested recommendations for potential study sites from NHTSA Washington and Regional Office staff. Additionally, the National SAFE KIDS Campaign and child passenger safety advocates recommended potential sites.

To determine if recommended sites met the stated selection criteria, the project staff contacted the sites and obtained information to determine which sites met the stated criteria. NHTSA Regional Office and State Highway Safety Office staff assisted the project staff by facilitating communication with the potential sites.

In March 2002, the project staff met with NHTSA staff to finalize the selection of study sites from a pool of 40 recommended inspection station sites. In addition to meeting the stated selection criteria, the following issues were considered in the selection process:

- Rural, urban, suburban service providers
- Programs serving diverse populations
- Geographical diversity
- Inclusion of identified sponsoring agency categories
- Feasibility of replication of the inspection station service

Study Sites

The following inspection stations were selected to be individual study sites:

1. Atlanta Fire Department, Atlanta, GA
2. Hoffman Estates Police Department, Hoffman Estates, IL
3. Mahube Community Council, Park Rapids, MN
4. Pat Clark GMC-Pontiac/Clark County SAFE KIDS Coalition, Las Vegas, NV
5. Primary Children's Medical Center, Salt Lake City, UT
6. Indiana Automotive Safety Program, Indianapolis, IN

The Indiana Automotive Safety Program was selected in order to study the operations of an inspection station network. Because the Indiana Automotive Safety Program represents

more than 50 individual inspection stations, the findings will not be reported in a manner parallel with the other sites.

7. Dagerman's Just for Kids, Las Vegas, NV.

Dagerman's Just for Kids was added as the seventh study site after the project staff learned of this inspection station during the visit to another site in Las Vegas. After observing the inspection station at this retail child specialty store and meeting with the store owners, the project staff and NHTSA agreed to include Dagerman's Just for Kids in the study.

Resource Information

Many worthwhile programs were proposed for consideration as project sites; however, only a limited number of sites could actually be studied. In order to give users of this study access to information about inspection station programs sponsored by agencies not included in the six individual study sites, brief summaries were compiled about several additional programs. These programs are referred to as "resource sites." Site administrators provided project staff with detailed information about their program. No on-site visits were made to resource sites. (See Appendix C)

Data Gathering Techniques

Site Visits

The project staff conducted on-site visits with the study sites to gather specific information about inspection station services. The project staff met with inspection station program managers, staff members, administrators, program users and various other individuals associated with the respective programs.

A 25-page site visit recording form was developed to document various aspects of the inspection stations' operations (See Appendix A). Areas of interest included:

- General site Information
- Operational Information
- Staffing issues
- Promotional and outreach activities
- Funding and budget issues
- Development of the inspection station
- Operational and administrative challenges
- Evaluation efforts
- Recommendations for other programs
- Child safety seat misuse trends

Observation

The project staff observed facilities where inspection services were conducted, as well as actual safety seat inspections.

Photographs

Photographs were taken to record inspection station facilities and user interactions. Some of these pictures are located in Appendix B.

User Feedback from Sites

Study sites provided the project staff with feedback from parents/caregivers who had utilized inspection station services. This feedback included general level of satisfaction with the inspection services, perceived ability to retain information presented, convenience of services and suggestions for improvement. Project staff members compiled and analyzed this data, comparing comments for similarities among study sites.